

sutta),³³ and he suggests that they were historically the earliest ones to appear; the Sūtra-aṅga was the earliest of the three. Yin Shun sees the gradual formation of SA (and also its counterpart SN) as corresponding to these three aṅgas formed in sequence. Accepting the Vastu-saṃgrahaṇī's statement, he suggests that the SA/SN (i.e. the synthesis of the three aṅgas) came into existence first, and that subsequent expansion of it yielded the other Āgamas/Nikāyas in the sequence MA/MN, DA/DN, EA/AN; and he concludes that the gradual formation of the nine aṅgas happened in parallel with development of the four Āgamas/Nikāyas, of which SA/SN was the foundation.³⁴

(2) The claim that SA consists of Sūtra, Geya, and Vyākaraṇa portions is mainly based on the Vastu-saṃgrahaṇī. The Pāli canon does not record such a tradition for SN. However, SA and SN are different versions (traditions) of the same collection, and comparison of the organisation of these two versions shows that they share a very similar structure. In both SN and SA the numerous discourses are grouped according to their subject matter into saṃyuktas (P. saṃyutta, Chinese xiāngyīng 相應) (literally, "connected with"). The saṃyuktas are grouped in turn into vargas (P. vagga, Ch. sòng tūō or pīn pǐn) ("sections"). Superimposed on this structure is, in the case of SA, a categorisation according to the three aṅgas (details are given in Chapter 1). While no such categorisation is applied in the SN tradition, it is likely to have existed.³⁵

(3) As mentioned above, the Sūtra-mātrkā in the Vastu-saṃgrahaṇī of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra* was shown by LÜ Cheng to be based on the SA. In fact it is based only on a portion of SA, namely the Sūtra-aṅga portion. The Sūtra-aṅga portion of SA comprises the greater part of four of its vargas, those titled "Aggregates", "Sense spheres", "Causal condition", and "Path". This portion is considered by Yin Shun to be the earliest in the historical

33 CSA i, "Preface", pp. 1-2. T 2, p. 739a; MN iii, p. 115.

34 *Formation*, pp. 630-631, 788-791 (cf. pp. 507, 622-625, 695-696); CSA i, "RESA", pp. 34, 39. According to Yin Shun, by expansion of the three aṅgas (compiled in SA/SN) new categories or classifications (aṅgas) then came to exist: aṅgas 6. Ityuktaka, 7. Jātaka, 8. Vaipulya, and 9. Adbhuta-dharma were compiled in MA, DA, and EA; aṅga 4. Gāthā corresponds to certain texts of *Sutta-nipāta*, and 5. Udāna is *Dhammapada*, both compiled in the Khuddaka-nikāya rather than being made part of the four basic Āgamas/Nikāyas (*Formation*, pp. 623-624, 808, 861). For the arguments by contemporary Buddhist scholars in regard to whether the nine (or twelve) aṅgas came to exist before the four Āgamas/Nikāyas or vice versa, see MAYEDA, pp. 486-488; *Formation*, pp. 5-6, 476-481; HIRAKAWA, pp. 74-75.

35 *Formation*, pp. 684-702; CSA i, "RESA", pp. 53-57.

formation of SA, and to contain the most fundamental teachings of the Buddha. In order to clarify the relationship between the Sūtra-mātṛkā of *Yogācāra-bhūmi* and the discourses of the extant Chinese SA, Yin Shun compiled his three-volume CSA. Vols. 1 and 2 cover the Sūtra-aṅga portion; vol. 3 covers the Geya and Vyākaraṇa portions.

(4) Yin Shun's textual research on the formation of early Buddhist texts suggests the following:

(a) SA/SN is an early compilation, whose structure had its origin in the first council; it therefore "represents" the situation with regard to the compilation of the Buddhist teachings shortly after the death of the Buddha.³⁶

(b) Although the extant SA and SN are sectarian texts, one can seek an understanding of early Buddhist teachings by studying them comparatively.³⁷

The above brief summary may suffice to give some idea of how Yin Shun's investigations into the early process of formation of the Buddhist Āgamas/Nikāyas point to the historical importance of SA/SN. Yin Shun's conclusions add to the significance of the present study of SA/SN. This study does not cover the entire SA/SN; it deals only with its Sūtra-aṅga portion focusing particularly on the main teachings contained in that portion. It makes use of Yin Shun's work, particularly that represented in vols. 1 and 2 of CSA. However, whereas Yin Shun is mainly concerned with structure, the present study focuses on content.

3. Aim and significance of the research

The doctrinal topics – the five aggregates, etc. – which define the saṃyuktas of SA/SN, are familiar subjects in Buddhist studies. However, a systematic comparison of how those doctrinal topics are dealt with in the Pāli SN and the Chinese SA has not been attempted hitherto. The present study is such a systematic comparison. Its purpose is to clarify the similarities and

36 *Formation*, pp. 629-630, 690, 732; CSA i, "Preface", p. 1. Yin Shun maintains that MA/MN, DA/DN, and EA/AN originated at the second council, one hundred years after the death of the Buddha, and thus represent the Buddhism of the period just before that council (*Formation*, p. 732).

37 CSA i, "RESA", p. 60.